

Press Release

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Contact:

Mark Lozo

Theodore Roosevelt Inaugural National Historic Site

716-884-0095 | mark_lozo@partner.nps.gov

National Park Service “Civil War to Civil Rights” Program Visits Buffalo

Event Marks 150th Anniversary of Lincoln’s Visit to Buffalo While on His Inaugural Journey from Springfield, Illinois to Washington, DC

(Buffalo – NY) Begin the American Civil War Sesquicentennial observance with a visit from “Abraham Lincoln” exactly 150 years to the day after his 1861 visit to Buffalo. This special visit by a nationally renowned Lincoln actor will take place on Thursday, February 17 from 7:00 to 8:30 p.m. at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Buffalo, 695 Elmwood Avenue (at West Ferry St.). **The presentation is free and open to the public.**

This program is part of the National Park Service’s “Civil War to Civil Rights” program. The NPS is sponsoring programming that will commemorate the 150 anniversary of President-elect Abraham Lincoln’s trip from Springfield, Illinois to Washington, DC, on February 11-23, 2011, by revisiting sixteen cities and towns at which Lincoln made remarks.

The 2011 Lincoln Inaugural anniversary route schedule is:

Friday, February 11, 2011: Springfield, Illinois and Indianapolis, Indiana; Saturday, February 12, 2011: Indianapolis, Indiana and Cincinnati, Ohio; Sunday, February 13, 2011: Cincinnati, Ohio and Columbus, Ohio; Monday, February 14, 2011: Columbus, Ohio and Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; Tuesday, February 15, 2011: Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania and Cleveland, Ohio; Wednesday, February 16, 2011: Cleveland, Ohio and Buffalo, New York; Thursday, February 17, 2011: Buffalo, New York; Friday, February 18, 2011: Buffalo, New York and Albany, New York; Saturday, February 19, 2011: Albany, New York and New York, New York; Sunday, February 20, 2011: New York, New York; Monday, February 21, 2011: New York, New York and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Tuesday, February 22, 2011: Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Harrisburg, Pennsylvania and Baltimore, Maryland; Wednesday, February 23, 2011: Baltimore, Maryland and Washington, DC.

The programming will feature acclaimed Lincoln actor Fritz Klein, who will present Lincoln as he tried to reassure a nation on the verge of Civil War. The program will include National Park Service Park Rangers who will supplement Lincoln’s remarks with the story of Lincoln’s

election, the turbulence that followed, and Lincoln's steadfast commitment to the principles of the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution, despite threats to the nation and himself. The program will also touch on how events of 150 years ago resonated through later generations up to and including today. The National Park Service is presenting these series of events in cooperation with many local cosponsors in each community.

About Abraham Lincoln's February, 1861 Buffalo Visit

Abraham Lincoln was elected President of the United States in November 1860. He made a grand one week railway tour from his hometown in Springfield, Illinois to his inauguration in Washington DC, which then took place in March. The trip was scheduled according to a precise timetable agreed upon along the route. The stops were brief and coincided with service requirements of fuel and water for the steam locomotive.

President-elect Abraham Lincoln arrived at the Exchange Street station on February 16, where he was greeted by former President and community leader Millard Fillmore, as well as massive and unruly crowds. Proceeding to the American Hotel in downtown Buffalo, he addressed the public. He faced an awkward challenge since, not yet in office, he had no authority to speak for the government. Confronted with the reality of Southern secession, he needed to also present an air of strength in the face of adversity, yet avoid arousing further animosity. That evening the President-elect greeted visitors at a public reception. Lincoln chose not to travel on February 17, as it fell on a Sunday. He instead attended worship services at the First Unitarian Church with Fillmore, and spent the afternoon at the Fillmore home. In the evening he attended a lecture at St. James Hall on the plight of Native Americans. He continued his journey the next morning.

About Lincoln Actor Fritz Klein

Considered one of the nation's foremost Lincoln actors, Richard F. (Fritz) Klein makes Lincoln and his period of history come alive. Klein was born in 1948 and was raised in Southern California. He graduated from Concordia College in Ft. Wayne, Indiana in 1970 and began acting as a hobby in 1975. The first time he was asked to portray Abraham Lincoln was in 1976 at a municipal celebration of the Nation's bicentennial. Klein now resides in Springfield, Illinois with his wife and family where he performs for some of the city's 500,000 annual visitors. From there he also travels to points across the nation on tours and by special invitation.

The program is presented in Buffalo by the National Park Service and the Theodore Roosevelt Inaugural National Historic Site, the only National Park Service location in Western New York. It is co-sponsored by the Unitarian Universalist Church of Buffalo, with assistance by the 155th NY Infantry Re-enactor Regiment, and Echoes Through Time History Center.

For more information about Fritz Klein, including images, visit www.lincolninstitute.com. For further information n about the sesquicentennial of Lincoln's journey to Washington, see nps.gov/liho.